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YOUNG AVENGERS®

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YOUNG AVENGERS

FAMILY MATTERS

PART THREE

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United by the Avengers Failsafe Program, a protocol designed to assemble the next wave of Earth's Mightiest Heroes, PATRIOT (ELIJAH BRADLEY, the grandson of the fabled "Black Captain America"), WICCAN (BILLY KAPLAN, a spell-caster), HULKLING (TEDDY ALTMAN, a shape-shifter), STATURE (CASSIE LANG, the size-changing daughter of the recently deceased Ant-Man), and KATE BISHOP (a resourceful teenage Avengers fan) were soon dubbed the "Young Avengers" by the press.

After a recent battle with the drug-empowered MISTER HYDE, Patriot was forced to confess he did not, in fact, possess super-powers. Hoping to live up to his grandfather's legend, Patriot used mutant growth hormone, a steroid, instead. Ashamed, he quit the team.

The Young Avengers' subsequent efforts to convince Patriot to rejoin the team were cut short by the SUPER-SKRULL--an alien shape-shifter with the combined powers of the Fantastic Four--who abducted Hulkling, claiming the youth was actually the son of the Skrull Princess Anelle, heir to the imperial throne and the Skrull Empire's only hope of winning their centuries-long war against the Kree.

Intent on rescuing Hulkling, the Young Avengers joined forces with the newly reconstituted Avenger THE VISION. The Vision, in turn, consulted the Avengers Failsafe Program and located THOMAS SHEPHERD, a volatile young speedster, who looks remarkably like Wiccan.

Their rescue mission was interrupted, however, by a band of Kree soldiers who shot the Super-Skrull in the chest before claiming Hulkling as one of their own...

YOUNG AVENGERS created by Allan Heinberg and Jim Cheung

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THE SUPER-SKRULL--

THE SUPER-SKRULL IS A *TERRORIST*. HE IS *NOT* YOUR CONCERN.

I AM *CAPTAIN AV-ROM* OF THE KREE IMPERIAL MILITIA...

...AND *YOU* ARE THE SON AND HEIR OF THE MAN WHO WAS ONCE ITS MIGHTIEST WARRIOR...

...*CAPTAIN MAR-VELL.*

MAR-VELL...?

MY FATHER WAS *CAPTAIN MARVEL?*

BUT... HOW IS THAT *POSSIBLE?*

AS YOU MUST KNOW, THE KREE AND THE SKRULL RACES HAVE BEEN AT WAR--FIGHTING FOR UNIVERSAL SUPREMACY--FOR GENERATIONS.

"SHORTLY BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, WHEN THE CONFLICT FINALLY REACHED *EARTH*...

"...THE SUPER-SKRULL CAPTURED MAR-VELL AND DELIVERED HIM INTO THE HANDS OF THE SKRULL EMPEROR.

"BUT THE EMPEROR'S *DAUGHTER*, IN LOVE WITH THE CAPTAIN, CONSPIRED WITH HIM TO *OVERTHROW* HER FATHER IN THE HOPE OF RESTORING PEACE BETWEEN THE RACES.

"AND, THOUGH MAR-VELL WAS FORCED TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE HUMAN, RICK JONES..."

...KREE INTELLIGENCE REPORTED THAT THE PRINCESS GAVE BIRTH TO A *HALF-BREED* SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

SO, I'M HALF-KREE, HALF-SKRULL?

NO...

...YOUR *FATHER* WAS KREE, WHICH MEANS *YOU* ARE KREE.

AND SINCE *HE* WAS AN OFFICER OF THE IMPERIAL MILITIA...

...SO ARE *YOU*.

MY MEN WILL ESCORT YOU TO THE SHIP.

WHAT?!?

LOOK, CAPTAIN...

...I'M SORRY YOU HAD TO COME ALL THIS WAY...

...BUT I CAN'T JUST PACK UP AND JOIN THE KREE ARMY.

ACCORDING TO KREE LAW...

...YOU HAVE NO *CHOICE*.

AGGH!

TEDDY!

TAKE HIM, MEN!

GET THE HATCHLING OUT OF HERE!
YOU'RE ALIVE...
FOR THE MOMENT. NOW, GO!
WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE. THEY'LL KILL HIM.
TEDDY, THE SUPER-SKRULL KIDNAPPED YOU. HE MURDERED YOUR MOM--
AND HE MAY HAVE JUST SAVED MY LIFE.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
NO WAY. I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE YOU AGAIN.
THEN STAY CLOSE AND COVER ME.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SAVING YOUR LIFE.
DON'T MAKE ME REGRET IT.
BUT THE KREE--
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE KREE...

"...THEY'RE IN OVER THEIR *HEADS.*"

HOW 'BOUT YOU DROP THE WEAPON BEFORE I DROP *YOU.*

WELL DONE, KATE BISHOP.

THANKS, BUT IT SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN *THREE* ARROWS TO BRING HIM DOWN.

THE KREE'S ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY MAKES THEM ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL RACES IN THE UNIVERSE.

UNTIL YOU USE IT *AGAINST* THEM...

...AT WHICH POINT THEY GET VERY *SLEEPY.*

SO, WHAT DO WE *DO* WITH THEM?

I COULD TRY A *TELEPORTATION SPELL,* BUT WITH SO MANY *PEOPLE--*

CAN I MAKE A SUGGESTION?

YOU'RE NOT *VAPORIZING* THEM, TOMMY.

DAMN.

*THERE IS ONE **OTHER** MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE TO US.*

YOU KNOW HOW TO FLY A KREE WARSHIP?

NO. BUT I WILL ONCE I'VE PATCHED MYSELF INTO THE NAVIGATION SYSTEM.

THEN ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SET A COURSE FOR AVENGERS TOWER AND--

I WOULDN'T DO THAT IF I WERE YOU.

IN FACT, AVENGERS TOWER IS PRETTY MUCH THE LAST PLACE I'D GO.

BECAUSE THE FIRST THING THE AVENGERS WILL DO IS TURN YOU OVER TO THE COPS.

AND THE NEXT THING THEY'LL DO IS TURN HULKLING OVER TO THE ALIENS--IF ONLY TO AVOID ANOTHER KREE-SKRULL WAR.

WHERE DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD GO?

WHY ARE YOU ASKING HIM?

BECAUSE HE'S NOT ENTIRELY WRONG.

LOOK, ALL I'M SAYING IS, IF ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS WAS BEING HUNTED...

...I'D SET A COURSE FOR A SECLUDED CORNER OF THE UNIVERSE WHERE THE KREE AND THE SKRULLS AND THE AVENGERS COULD NEVER FIND US.

AND WHERE WOULD THAT BE, EXACTLY?

NO IDEA, BUT--

SET A COURSE FOR AVENGERS TOWER.

ELI--

WE CAN'T JUST RUN AWAY FROM THIS. IT'LL FIND US. AND WHEN IT DOES, WE WON'T BE ABLE TO FIGHT IT BY OURSELVES.

AND ANYONE WHO FEELS DIFFERENTLY IS WELCOME TO LEAVE.

YOUR BOYFRIEND HAS CONTROL ISSUES.

HE'S NOT MY BOYFRIEND.

GOOD TO KNOW.

I WANT HIM TO HEAL, I WANT HIM TO HEAL...

THE SPELL ISN'T WORKING.

PROBABLY BECAUSE I *DON'T* WANT HIM TO HEAL.

DO NOT TROUBLE YOURSELVES. MY BODY WILL REGENERATE. IN TIME.

IT'S A SHAME TEDDY'S *MOTHER* CAN'T SAY THE *SAME*.

BILLY--

THE MAGE IS RIGHT.

I DID NOT INTEND TO *KILL* YOUR SURROGATE. BUT SHE *ATTACKED* AND I...

I...HAVE *MURDERED* MY KINSWOMAN AND FAILED IN MY MISSION. PERHAPS YOU *SHOULD* HAVE LET ME DIE.

YOUR MISSION TO *KIDNAP* ME?

NO, CHILD.

MY MISSION TO *SAVE* YOU...

"...AS YOUR FATHER TRIED TO SAVE ME."

YOU WOULD BETRAY YOUR FATHER, PRINCESS? AND YOUR PEOPLE?

MY FATHER IS THE TRAITOR, KL'RT.

HE HAS FORSAKEN HIS PEOPLE--EMPTIED THE TREASURY--AND KEPT US EMBROILED IN A WAR THAT NO ONE--NOT EVEN YOU--CAN REMEMBER WHY WE ARE FIGHTING.

YOU WERE MY FATHER'S CHAMPION. YET HE HAS EXILED YOU--IMPRISONED YOU--AND STILL YOU REMAIN FAITHFUL. WHY?

I AM MERELY A SOLDIER, PRINCESS. I CANNOT PRETEND TO KNOW WHAT IS BEST FOR MY PEOPLE.

YOU ARE FAR MORE THAN THAT, KL'RT. YOU'RE THE SUPER-SKRULL. YOU'RE THEIR HERO.

JOIN US.

IF YOUR PEOPLE SAW YOU FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM ALONGSIDE A MAN OF THE KREE--

I CANNOT, CAPTAIN.

BUT--

THERE IS NO TIME, MY LOVE. ONCE THE GUARDS DISCOVER YOUR ABSENCE--

DO NOT FEAR...

...THE GUARDS WILL NOT SOON DISCOVER YOUR ABSENCE.

"THEN IT'S TRUE..."

...MY FATHER *WAS* CAPTAIN MARVEL.

YES. AND YOUR *MOTHER*--HAD SHE SURVIVED GALACTUS--WOULD HAVE BECOME *EMPRESS*.

MY MISSION WAS TO MAKE YOU *EMPEROR*.

BUT THE KREE WILL NOT PERMIT THIS.

TO *THEM*, YOU ARE A GENETIC CURIOSITY, A HOSTAGE, A POTENTIAL WEAPON.

AND IF THEY CANNOT *CONTROL* YOU, THEY WILL *KILL* YOU.

AND THE SKRULLS WON'T?

NOT WHILE *I* AM AROUND.

AND NOT WHILE YOU HAVE THE *YOUNG AVENGERS* PROTECTING YOU--AS THE *AVENGERS* PROTECTED YOUR FATHER.

IRONIC, IS IT NOT? THAT MAR-VELL AND THE SCARLET WITCH WERE MY *PRISONERS* DURING THE *FIRST* KREE-SKRULL WAR ON EARTH, AND NOW I OWE MY LIFE TO THEIR *SONS*.

BUT I'M NOT THE SCARLET WITCH'S *SON*.

OF COURSE YOU ARE. YOU AND YOUR *TWIN*? THE MAGE AND THE SPEEDSTER?

THE SCARLET WITCH NEVER HAD CHILDREN.

ACCORDING TO SKRULL INTELLIGENCE SHE DID.

TWIN BOYS...

...THOMAS AND WILLIAM.

IS IT TRUE?

ACCORDING TO THE FORMER VISION'S MEMORY FILES...

...THE SCARLET WITCH WAS SO DESPERATE TO HAVE CHILDREN...

...SHE UNCONSCIOUSLY USED HER REALITY-ALTERING POWERS TO CREATE TWIN BOYS, THOMAS AND WILLIAM, OUT OF TWO LOST SOULS...

...SOULS WHICH WERE LATER CLAIMED BY MEPHISTO, LORD OF THE NETHERWORLD, AS HIS OWN.

HOWEVER...

...WHEN MEPHISTO REABSORBED THE TWINS' SOULS, THEY HAD BEEN SO TRANSFIGURED BY WANDA'S MAGIC THAT THEY DESTROYED THE DEMON AND DISPERSED.

THOMAS AND WILLIAM CEASED TO EXIST. AS DID THE SCARLET WITCH'S MEMORY OF THEM...

...UNTIL RECENTLY...

...WHEN, GRIEF-STRICKEN, THE SCARLET WITCH LOST CONTROL OF HER POWERS, INADVERTENTLY KILLING ANT-MAN, HAWKEYE, AND THE FORMER VISION.

BUT TOMMY AND I DIDN'T CEASE TO EXIST.

LOOK, I SEE WHERE YOU'RE GOING WITH THIS, BUT--

BECAUSE IT'S OBVIOUS.

WE'RE THE SCARLET WITCH'S TWINS.
OY...
WE *HAVE* TO BE. *THINK* ABOUT IT.
WHEN MEPHISTO WAS DESTROYED, OUR SOULS WERE SET *FREE.*
MINE ENDED UP WITH THE KAPLANS ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE.
AND *YOURS* ENDED UP...
...IN SPRINGFIELD, NEW JERSEY? I DON'T *THINK* SO.
TOMMY, WE LOOK EXACTLY ALIKE.
I HAVE THE *SCARLET WITCH'S* POWERS. YOU HAVE HER TWIN BROTHER *QUICKSILVER'S* POWERS.
OUR NAMES ARE EVEN *TOMMY* AND *BILLY.*
HOW *ELSE* DO YOU EXPLAIN IT?
WE'RE THE CHILDREN OF THE SCARLET WITCH AND--
--WHOEVER THE *FATHER* WAS.
ACCORDING TO THE VISION'S MEMORY FILES, IT WAS...
...ME--
EE--EEE--
VISION!

VISION? YOU OKAY? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

WHAT THE HELL *HIT* US?

A SKRULL *WARSHIP.*

THEY MUST HAVE RECEIVED MY TRANSMISSIONS *AFTER* ALL.

THEN WHY ARE THEY *FIRING* AT US?

OUR SHIP. THEY THINK WE ARE THE *KREE.*

WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?*

IF I DO NOT *REVEAL* MYSELF, THEY WILL *DESTROY* US.

YOU *CAN'T* FLY. YOU'RE *WOUNDED.*

BUT--

I'LL GO.

YOU *CAN'T. YOU'RE* THE REASON THEY'RE *HERE.*

WHICH IS WHY, WHEN THEY SEE ME...

...MAYBE THEY'LL STOP TRYING TO *KILL* US.

WHY DO I *BOTHER?* HE DOESN'T *LISTEN.*

I *HEARD* THAT.

OH, SURE. *NOW* HE LISTENS.

ATTENTION, SKRULLS!

CEASE FIRE!!!!

I SAID, CEASE FIRE!

IT'S LIKE YOU *WANT* THEM TO CAPTURE YOU.

FIRST YOU'RE BONDING WITH THE *SUPER-SKRULL*, NOW YOU'RE BASICALLY OFFERING YOURSELF TO *THESE* SKRULLS--

THEY'RE MY *PEOPLE.*

THEY'RE *NOT* YOUR PEOPLE. THEY'RE NOT EVEN *PEOPLE.* THEY'RE--

OH, MY GOD...

WHAT WAS *THAT?*

BOOM

ANOTHER KREE SHIP.
THEY JUST *MURDERED* ALL THOSE SKRULLS.
I DON'T KNOW, TED...
...THEY LOOK PRETTY *ALIVE* TO ME.
NOT FOR LONG IF WE DON'T STOP THEM FROM *KILLING* EACH OTHER.
HOW DO YOU PROPOSE WE DO *THAT?*
I HAVE SOMETHING THEY BOTH *WANT*, REMEMBER?
NO, YOU *ARE* SOMETHING THEY BOTH WANT.
EXACTLY.

HOLD YOUR FIRE!

THEY'RE NOT LISTENING.

A TRAIT WHICH I NOW REALIZE IS OBVIOUSLY *GENETIC.* ON BOTH *SIDES.*

I AM THE SON OF THE KREE CAPTAIN MAR-VELL AND THE SKRULL PRINCESS ANELLE...

...WHICH UNFORTUNATELY RHYMES...

...AND I URGE YOU TO CEASE FIRE SO WE CAN SETTLE THIS WITHOUT BLOODSHED.

WOW...IT *WORKED.* I CAN'T *BELIEVE* IT.

I GUESS IT JUST GOES TO SHOW YOU WHAT CAN *HAPPEN* IF YOU REACH *OUT* AND--

UM... TED?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, KIDS...

...WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

THE SON OF *MAR-VELL?*

AND THEREFORE A CONSCRIPTED *SOLDIER* IN THE KREE ARMY--

THE HATCHLING IS THE HEIR TO THE SKRULL EMPERORS DORREK AND R'KILL!

MAKE NO MISTAKE, IF THE BOY IS NOT *IMMEDIATELY* RELEASED INTO KREE CUSTODY, WE WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE *MILITARY* ACTION AGAINST THIS PLANET.

ALL *EIGHT* OF YOU?

EVEN NOW A KREE *BATTLE CRUISER* IS ENTERING THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, READY TO *STRIKE* AT OUR COMMAND.

AS IS THE *SKRULL ARMADA.*

SNIFF SNIFF

I SMELL *BLUFFING.*

GIVE US THE BOY OR FIND OUT.

IT'S YOUR MOVE, HULKLING.

HE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

CAP, PLEASE...

...DON'T MAKE ME GO WITH THEM.

ANY THOUGHTS?

ONLY THAT IF WE DON'T HAND HIM OVER...

...WE COULD HAVE ANOTHER KREE-SKRULL WAR ON OUR HANDS.

WHAT IS YOUR DECISION, CAPTAIN?

CAP, PLEASE--TEDDY DOESN'T BELONG WITH THEM.

WE'RE THE ONLY FAMILY HE'S GOT NOW. YOU CAN'T--

I'VE MADE MY DECISION, ELI...

HULKLING STAYS *HERE.*

UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE *AVENGERS.*

THEN IT IS *YOU* WHO NEED PROTECTION.

CAP! LOOK *OUT!*

UZZZZZZT

ELI! *NO!*

OH, MY GOD.

CAP...?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SON.

JUST HOLD *ON...*

...EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT.

TO BE CONCLUDED...

EMPIRE
ZONE
EMPIRE
ZONE
KL!Z8